

Temporal evidentials without tense
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Evidential constructions in several languages encode – in addition to the evidence-type specification – a temporal relation between the prejacent proposition and the Evidence Acquisition Time (EAT) (e.g., Chung 2007, Fleck 2007, Koev 2011, 2017, Lee 2013, Smirnova 2013, among others). Evidentials of this type discussed so far seem to all be involved in tense- or verbal inflection. In Bulgarian, for example, the relation between the EAT and the prejacent's reference time is specified by, and varies according to, tense inflection (Smirnova 2013, Koev 2017).

In this talk we investigate a range of different evidentials and their temporal properties: inferential and reportative evidentials in Japanese, English, St'át'imcets (Lillooet Salish), Gitksan (Tsimshianic) and German. We show that there are evidentials which encode a temporal relation but are not involved in tense- or verbal inflection. These evidentials lexically specify a certain fixed relation between RT and EAT, independent of temporal properties of the prejacent. Based on our cross-linguistic study, we propose a typology and a micro-parameter of variation. We also relate our findings to the hypothesis that languages combine universal semantic 'building blocks' of meaning in language-specific ways (von Stechow and Matthewson 2018).